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The notion of state in the Latvian language. Connotations of topical usage using discourse analysis

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Summary. One of the most powerful political concepts in Europe, including Latvia, is the welfare state. Whether or not the Latvian language environment reveals hopes and expectations regarding the notion may be determined through a close study of the parliamentary discourse of the past five years, as well as the language user opinions regarding state. The goal of the research is to analyse the topical usage of the notion *state* and its connotations. As data collection tools, the study used language corpora which display the most frequent collocations and the related semantic fields of a given word. The data analysis was carried out via critical discourse analysis focusing on the dominant characteristics in the language use. The analysis found contradictory usage of the word state. Within the speeches of the members of the parliament, deviations from the definition of the state and new connotations attached to the notion were observed, implying a collective responsibility of the state instead of individual. Both language users and members of the parliament await a strict governmental management and wish to view it as an authority. The desire of a wealth-providing, generous state could signify a hope for a welfare state, albeit peculiarly interpreted.

Keywords: discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis, language corpus, parliamentary discourse, welfare state

Introduction

Latvia enters the 21st century with the load of an economic crisis on its shoulders, which, following the delight of the regained independence, adds a new dimension to the relationship between the individual and the state (Ministry of Finances, 15.11.2018). Although the major crisis has been left behind and the economical growth of Latvia has been deemed a ‘success story’ (Kruks, 2016), its impact, consequences and communication forms leave a lot to explore, assess, and analyse. National identity has separately been examined in the volume “Multiple and changing Latvian identities” (eds. J. Rozenvalds, A. Zobena, published by the University of Latvia (UL)), looking at it both as an individual’s sense of belonging to a nation and the manner in which the nation identifies itself (Rozenvalds,

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et.al., 2014.). A study conducted by the Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU), “Overcoming crisis in Latvia: economic, social, and communication aspects”, seeks answers to how the society of Latvia overcame the obstacles of the crisis. Both volumes focus greatly on statehood and the individual’s relationship with state.

K. Sedlenieks has defined this spectrum of relationship on the macro-level, describing state as a form of organised society (Sedlenieks, 2012). In his view, the existence of a state requires a consensus among the members of society about the appropriate actions to maintain the state. Sedlenieks looks into deliberate avoidance of the state as a survival strategy in Latvia today and defines state as a unified system where ‘a consensus among society members works alongside the state as a form of government. Thus, a state cannot be opposed to or even separated from society.’ However, in the post-crisis period, social actors’ opinions on state might not just have changed but silenced, impacting both individual lives and political processes. In the RSU volume on overcoming economic crisis, the political scientist X. Landes evaluates the political events in Europe during the last five years. He has called for them to be viewed as a political crisis centering on a new attitude towards the state as a welfare provider and guarantor (Landes, 2016). I. Skulte and N. Kozlovs also view welfare as the most topical issue in the politics of Latvia today (Skulte, et.al., 2018) referring to the National Development plan for 2014-2020 which claims welfare to be the main goal of the state. However, within the communicative aspects of the parliamentary discourse, the scholars have observed depolitization of the notion of welfare and its separation from state: “The contextual connotations of the word *labklājība* in the parliamentary debate express two distinct concepts. (1) Welfare is an individual responsibility of citizens who attain their private material wealth in the process of labor relations, while welfare to persons in need is provided by the state bureaucracy. (2) Welfare is an abstract, general good.” This insight proves that depolitization of the parliamentary discourse has rendered impossible the definition of the notion in the political and ideological principles of the state, creating a dilemma of a desire for a supportive state and the inability to formulate the desire. The Prime Minister Krišjānis Kariņš, in connection to the notion of welfare, substitutes the word *state* with *model* (LSM, 22.10.2019). Therefore, it is worthwhile to look at the topical usage of the word *state* in Latvia and whether the changes in the country caused by the crisis can be observed in communication, whether the usage implies a desire for a welfare state, as well as the discursive reflections of the actors’ view of the state.

Discourse analysis, political discourse and corpus research

A united approach to the terms *discourse analysis* and *discourse* has long been sought and is still being discussed. Stefan Titsher, Michael Meyer, Ruth Wodak, Eva Vetter in „Methods of Text and Discourse Analysis” (Titsher, 2000) explore the etymology of the notion *discourse* assuming that it has derived from the Latin *discurrere* (to-and-fro), or its nominal *discursus* denoting either flight, presumption, or giving information. In the medieval version, the word could also mean argument, orbit, or movement. St. Thomas Aquinas used the word in philosophy; in his understanding, it meant intellectual discussion.

A prominent figure in the historical background of the notion is Michel Foucault, who viewed discourse analysis as a way to acquire new knowledge, whereas discourse, with no clear definition, was characterized as a part of discursive practice and the number of utterances within a single stretch (as described the second chapter in his chrestomathic work “The Archaeology of Knowledge”). Foucault introduces the notion of subject, as, in his view, the subject is created by discourse (Foucault, 2012, 25). The importance of discourse in the public framework has been emphasised by Jurgen Habermas; he inquires about ways how discursive formation of wishes and opinions might be executed in the circumstances of a democratic society so that the differences between personal interests and the common good, the roles of a consumer and a citizen, are diminished. Habermas views the link between citizenship and the political environment as a body of communicative circumstances which can discursively form opinions (Habermas, 1991).

Critical discourse analysis (CDA), as a separate approach and school, emerged by the end of the 20th century, based on the idea on a disproportional distribution of power: institutions control not only social resources but also the approach to linguistic resources (Van Dijk, 2011). The most prominent figures in this school are Ruth Wodak, Norman Fairclough and Teun Adrianus van Dijk. CDA concerns issues such as critical analysis of social problems, social inequality, domination and other relevant elements, as well as the communication in its realization. The subject of CDA is power, or, according to T. van Dijk, the main focus of CDA are malevolent manifestations of power (Van Dijk, 2008, 4). In his view, malpractice of power can only be reflected in language where there is a possibility for change and choice. T. van Dijk also points out that currently power manifestations are mostly manipulative and convincing instead of forceful; therefore, discourse plays a crucial part in the consensus of society.

CDA does not deny the Marxist tradition, which is linked to an ideology grounded by Michael Bakhtin (Михаил Бахтин) and Valentin Voloshinov (В.Волошинов). The linguistic theory of ideology views each occurrence of language use as an ideological example. Although the Marxist approach does not directly link ideology to power manifestations, Voloshinov claims that a ruling ideology, which is based on an ideological sign, is always slightly reactionary and tends to emphasize the truth of the previous day as the truth of today (Voloshinov, 2000).

The parliamentary discourse, as a body of political speeches and texts, must be examined from a critical perspective. Teun Adrianus van Dijk views discourse analysis and the notion of discourse itself both in a broad (as a complex communicative occurrence) and a more specific (a text or a conversation) sense. He connects discourse to text and language, social formation, emphasises the importance of context, and links it to the notions of ideology and power (Van Dijk, 1998).

Regarding political discourse, the analysis can be carried out on multiple levels – from separate political agents and groups to the highest level of the political system. Thus, a speech by a representative of the parliament can be regarded as an expression of individual as well as group values – reflecting the ideology of a political party, electors, and acting in opposition to other parties. At the same time, the speech would also represent and recreate the parliamentary democratic system as well as the historical and cultural background

of the time (Dijk 2008, 156). The theoretical background of CDA in political discourse mostly includes the structure and functions of political debate, meaning a performance by members of the parliament and government with the pragmatic function and aim to present and legitimate specific decisions and projects, support or oppose the government. Therefore, the methods of parliamentary debate analysis must be based on these global functions, whereas the structures of separate speeches within the debate can be described as individual actions aimed at the execution of the political functions (Dijk 2008, 187).

T. van Dijk emphasises that regardless of the political or interpersonal discourse, its real power can only have formal consequences when it appears in written form. Formal dialogues, meetings, interviews, debates usually are saved in form of a protocol or other official transcription. In most cases, the written text is explicitly planned, therefore better controlled – the manifestations of power have a ‘veil’ drawn over them (Dijk 2008, 145). Corpus analysis is especially important in analysis of the large body of structured data.

In corpus analysis, the corpus can be compared to democracy; the meanings of words are not fixed, and each individual’s opinions on the meaning of a word are respected – there is no unified truth/untruth or correctness/wrongfulness. Corpus linguistics views language as a social phenomenon where the word in a text refers or is linked to previous occurrences of the word, whether in the same or all other available texts (Teubert, Cermáková, 2007). In academic research, the language corpus is defined as a large body of texts (structured or transcribed) available for computerized research, created according to specific criteria and meant for linguistic analysis and the development of language technology (Levāne-Petrova, 2012).

Corpus data often contains morphological, syntactic, semantic or other types of markings. The language corpus includes authentic sources of language reflecting its actual use, creating new possibilities for language studies and development of research tools.

A prominent characteristic of parliamentary discourse is that virtually all speeches are “created for a protocol”, transcribed with remarks and parentheses (Dijk 2008, 145). In Latvia, a state of parliamentary democracy, the order of parliamentary discussion is determined by the Rules of the Parliament (*Saeimas kārtības rullis*, (www.saeima.lv)). The discussions are regulated and must be carried out in accordance with a specific debate procedure. The politologist I. Ījabs describes parliamentary discussions as a “talk-room” which gathers the circulating sources of communication of the broader public environment – media, citizen forums and associations (Ījabs, Kruks 2008). The debate corpus of the Parliament of Latvia represents the narrow sense of language use – political discourse – including all words that have been uttered by the deputies on stage and in the hall between 1993 and 2018; 13 million words altogether. Such a large number makes it possible to explore the correlations in political speech. It provides not only the stance of a deputy or a party in certain issues but also the proof of accountability via a collection of tools allowing different perspectives of parliamentary discourse analysis (studies of separate meetings, convocations, parties, persons, ages or genders) (saeima.korpus.lv).

The Balanced Corpus of the Current Latvian Language Texts (*Līdzsvarotais mūsdienu latviešu valodas tekstu korpusis*), further – the Latvian language corpus, is a general automatized morphologically marked corpus of texts in Latvian (approx. 10 million words)

containing different genres of authentic texts and metadata since 1991. The corpus provides periodicals (60%), fiction (20%), scientific articles (10%), normative acts (8%), shorthand transcripts of the Parliament (2%) (korpuss.lv/id/LVK2018).

Hypothesis, goal, research procedure

The notion *welfare state* in the social and political environment of Latvia is not used frequently; instead, substitutions are sought, for instance, a *socially responsible state* (Skulte, Kozlovs, 2018). The corpus of parliamentary debates finds merely five occurrences of the utterance *welfare state*, whereas the Latvian language corpus provides 26 occurrences, excluding the parliamentary debates. However, it is expected that the political discourse should reveal a perspective of a supportive, responsible and caring state. The hypothesis coincides with the goal of the research, including also comparison of the topical usage of the notion *state* and its dictionary and political document definitions.

To analyse the opinions regarding the state via the topical usage and connotations of the notion, an insight into the definitions of *state* in academic dictionaries and the dictionaries in Latvian is provided. Alongside the definitions, the topical usage of the word *state* in the most important political documents and rule collections is reviewed. The results are then compared.

The next step of the research employs the method of discourse analysis. Language corpora are used as data collection tools, namely, Communications faculty and UL Artificial Intelligence laboratory tools for Saeima session transcript corpus analysis: **saeima.korpuss.lv**, as well as both Saeima and Latvian language corpora accessible at **korpuss.lv**.

The discourse analysis compares topical usage of the notion *state* and its connotations in the Latvian language corpus (as used by the general society) and the Parliamentary debate corpus (the political environment). The study analyses the frequency, context, fields of usage, and compares both environments. A detailed view of the usage of the word *state* in different convocations of the Parliament is provided. The usage of the word in statements during the 12th convocation is reviewed, including the post-crisis period and looking for implicit signs of a desire for/an opinion of a welfare state.

Topical usage and connotations of the word «state» – definition in dictionaries, in political documents and topical usage in language corpora

The word «state» as explained in dictionaries

The largest academic dictionaries tellingly explain the word *state* in relation to a politically self-sustained, organised community, e.g., the Oxford Dictionary defines state as “A nation or territory considered as an **organized political community** under one government. An organized political community or area forming part of a federal republic. The civil government of a country.”

Merriam-Webster Dictionary also emphasises the self-organisation principle and describes state as a body of people and society:

“... a **politically organized body of people** usually occupying a definite territory; especially one that is sovereign; ...the political organization of such a body of people; a government or **politically organized society** having a particular character (a police state) (the welfare state)”

Duhaime’s Law Dictionary defines state as “groups of people which have acquired international recognition as an independent country and which have a population, a common language and a defined and distinct territory.”

Explanation of the word «state» in dictionaries in Latvian

Latvian literary language dictionary (tezaurs.lv/llvv) explains state as “a political **organization** which is used to actualize all-inclusive **governing** (*vadišana*) of society and the existing system (*iekārta*). Land, territory where this organization exists.”

The electronic dictionary “**Vardnica.lv**” offers a very brief explanation: “Legally **organized** nation in a particular territory. State **system**. Realm (figuratively, poetry).”

The definition provided by the Latvian language dictionary (Guļevska, 1987) is rather interesting: “a political **organization** founded by a ruling class in a country, whose task is to maintain the rule prevailing in this country and to suppress resistance of other classes; also, the land in which such a political organization exists.” One must keep in mind that the dictionary and the entry was written before the reacquisition of independence; it is nevertheless surprising to see such a huge transformation in definitions within a short timespan.

Latvian etymology dictionary (Karulis, 2001) views the origins of the word: «State» (Latvian – *valsts*) from the word «reign» (*valdīt*). Usage is similar to the modern Lithuanian word «valstybė» and Finnish «valtio». Originally the word «state» was used to describe a county or parish **ruled by a single lord** (*kungs*). It is still used so in Russian (волость — ‘*pagasts*’) and Estonian (vald — ‘*pagasts*’).

As late as the 18th and 19th century, the word «state» denoted **government** of different levels (adding the necessary descriptor) – not only «emperors state» (empire), «kings state» (kingdom), «dukes (*lielkungs*) state» (duchy), but also «churches state» (congregation) and «manor state» (demesne) (*muižas valsts/muižas novads*), most prominently observed in the region of Vidzeme.

Explanation of the word «state» in documents published in Latvian

Guidelines for National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy 2012–2018¹ emphasises first and foremost the role of language and culture, only further followed by democracy:

“National state – a state whose national cultural identity is determined by its country (*valstsnācija*). The language of a country (*valstsnācija*) is a national **language** – a common

¹ Nacionālās identitātes, pilsoniskās sabiedrības un integrācijas politikas pamatnostādnes 2012.-2018.gadam [Accessed on 20.10.2019] Access through Internet: (https://www.km.gov.lv/uploads/ckeditor/files/Sabiedrības_integrācija/KM_130515_Prec_Nac_ident_pilson_sab_un_itegr_polit_pamatnost_2012-2018.pdf)

language of communication and democratic participation of all citizens, the **culture**, way of life, social memory of this nation are common to all citizens. Democracy in Latvia can only function well if all inhabitants of Latvia take responsibility for their country and through democratic institutions take part in rationally solving societal problems.”

Guidelines for the development of public administration policy for 2014-2020, Cabinet of Ministers Decree No. 827, 30 December 2014² claims cultural norms and values to be the primary aspects. This document does not deviate from the term *welfare state*, albeit connects it to “the developed Western world”: “By example of the developed Western countries, a welfare state can be formed not only by improving the country’s economy, focusing on a social democratic and widespread welfare policy – it is instead influenced by the positive **cultural** norms of the population, including strict work ethic, high level of trust in the state, high participation of citizens in public processes, family **values** and individual responsibility.”

Latvian National Development Plan for 2014-2020, approved by the decision of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia of December 20, 2012³ also stresses language and culture, focusing especially on preservation of cultural heritage as the forming grounds of a state. “The Latvian state is founded to implement the rights of self-determination for the Latvian people. Latvia is open and friendly to people of all nationalities who accept the meaning of Latvia’s existence – the development of the Latvian nation, its **language** and **culture** in its own country. Latvia in 2020 will be very much Latvian and self-confident, safe and citizen-friendly, green and well-maintained, prosperous, efficient and competitive country with hardworking, educated, creative, healthy and happy people. (...) The state pays special attention to preserving, maintaining and promoting the basic **values** of Latvian **cultural** heritage.”

In the Latvian Sustainable Development Strategy until 2030⁴ Latvia has been described as a to-be “thriving state full of active and responsible citizens. Everyone will be able to feel safe and have a sense of belonging to Latvia, each one will be able to fulfill their goals. The strength of the nation will be based on the legacy, acquired and newly created **cultural** and spiritual **values**, the richness of the Latvian **language** and the knowledge of other languages. It will unite society in the creation of new, diverse and unique values in economics, science and **culture** that will be appreciated, recognized and respected outside of Latvia.” It should be mentioned that the document containing this vision and aim has officially been accepted by the Parliament; one can see that language, culture and values again play a crucial role.

² Valsts pārvaldes politikas attīstības pamatnostādnes 2014.-2020.gadam, Ministru kabineta 2014.gada 30. decembra rīkojums Nr. 827 [Accessed on 20.10.2019] Access through Internet: (http://lakrs.lv/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Valsts-parvaldes-politikas-attistibas-pamatnostadnes-2014.-2020.gadam_PILNS.pdf)

³ Latvijas Nacionālais attīstības plans 2014. – 2020. gadam, apstiprināts ar 2012.gada 20. decembra Latvijas Republikas Saeimas lēmumu. [Accessed on 20.10.2019] Access through Internet: (<https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=253919>)

⁴ Latvijas ilgtspējīgas attīstības stratēģija līdz 2030. gadam, Latvijas Republikas Saeima [Accessed on 20.10.2019] Access through Internet: (https://www.pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/inline-files/Latvija_2030_7.pdf)

Summary on connotations in dictionaries and documents

Within the article, the word *connotation* is understood as an idea or feeling which a word invokes for a person in addition to its literal or primary meaning. Examination of the connotations of the word *state* in dictionaries and documents reveals different characteristics in each of the reviewed body of sources.

1. In classical dictionaries, the definition of a state emphasizes the **creation of a political self-organization** and joint management of people's groups.
2. In the Latvian language dictionaries, the state is an **organization that governs and ensures governance**.
3. In government documents the definition of state has a **special role for language, culture and values** (cultural, lifestyle, family, spiritual, traditional).

Reviewing governmental documents, one can already speak of topical usage of *state* and the “veiled” (T. van Dijk) dominating discourse, which in this case refers to new connotations regarding state, its role and functions. Deviations from the linguistic, dictionary-formulated meaning are observed, ideologically charging the notion and attaching other connotations to it.

Data collection using language corpora

Work with language corpora requires the use of special programmes which allow advanced search inquiries. The word or lemma is displayed within concordances – a tool showing the sentences or clauses where these words or phrases appear.

The inquiry *state* shows the following results:

- Saeima debate corpus (includes all speeches from Saeima sessions between the years 1993–2018) - found 29 604 fragments;
- Latvian language corpus (without „Saeima” and „Normative acts”) – found 24,843 fragments.

The next step reviews the selection principle identifying most common word combinations in connection with the word «state» in language corpora. Occurrences of word combinations viewed:

- by the frequency of numerical use (collocations) excluding punctuation, predilection and conjunctions;
- one word to the right, one to the left, in all cases and conjugations.

A selection of this option allows the researcher to see the context of each occurrence, which is important when analysing frequent combinations and collocations. It is then possible to use the obtained concordances to generate statistics on the most frequent usages of a word, in this case, the word *state* (Table 1). The first twenty hits already reveal inconsistencies in meaning as used by the general public and members of the parliament. A close study includes a more precise analysis of the fields of usage.

Table 1. The combinations of the word *state* with other words (1 right, 1 left; 20 most common relevant words)

Nr.	Language corpora		Total Saima debate corpora	
1	Baltic	1 025	Our	7 527
2	Latvia	748	Administration	6 912
3	police	510	Budget	5 275
4	European	389	Language	4 860
5	our	385	Latvia	4 685
6	budget	384	President	4 385
7	revenue	255	Revenue	2 556
8	president	254	Other	2 056
9	administration	248	Control	1 835
10	EU	243	Security	1 558
11	Islamic	236	Democratic	1 356
12	world	234	an official	1 305
13	other	231	(their) own	1 145
14	Scandinavian	199	Property	1 140
15	fire fighting	198	European	981
16	president	197	Secret	909
17	police	162	Forest	865
18	other	156	Interest	858
19	informed	154	Institution	829
20	language	138	Enterprise	828

Fields generated on the basis of most frequently used words:

Latvian language corpus

Analysing the concordances obtained from the Latvian language corpus, it is possible to determine communication fields in which users of the Latvian language mention the word *state*. Parentheses indicate conjugations and inflections to display the variation in use.

Place in the national structure (Baltic; Latvia; Scandinavia; European; EU; Eastern Europe; Western Europe; Russian; Europe; CIS)

Belonging (our; ours; our own) (*mūsu; savas; savu; savā*) and **alienation** (this; those; these) (*šo; šīs; šajā; šī; tās; tas*)

Finance (budget; revenue; economy; capital; secured; stock; funds; money)

Power (power; control) and **function** of the **administration** (government; police; agency; grammar school; Employment; authorities; administration; institution; ministries; chancellery; cashbox; ministries; secretary; firefighting; civil service; officials; education)

Volume (all; everything) (*visā; kopumā; visas; visu*) and **boundaries** (others; other) (*citū; citās; citām; citas to; citā*)

Languages (language; languages) (*valodas; valodā; valodu*) and the role of the **Presidency** (President) (*prezidents; prezidenta; prezidente; prezidentes; prezidentam*)

Operation (supports; exists; can; happens)

Scales and levels (territory; scale; level; situation; sector; region; cities; city; only; between; both; outside; interwar)

Safety, justice (social; support; rights)

Resources (land; roads; forest; plants; sea)

Quality (development; developed)

Domestic factors (population; culture; holiday; work; celebration)

Political governance (policy; independence; secret)

Other (too vague to be categorized): (meaning; origin; highest; experience; fixed)

(Viewed: <100, without punctuation, predilections, conjunctions)

Fields generated on the basis of most commonly used words: Saeima sessions

The use of the word *state* is viewed in the Parliament debate corpus, obtaining an overview of the fields and perspectives in which the word is used by the members of the Parliament.

Belonging (ours; Latvia; own) and **alienation** (that; this; other)

Government (government; control; ministry)

Finance (budget; revenue; property)

The role of the **President** (president) and **language** (language)

Security (security)

Place in the national structure (European; Baltic states)

Political device (democratic)

Other: (only)

In both corpora, the topical usage fields were generated based on the first 100 concordances without punctuation, predilections, conjunctions.

Observations on the topical usage fields of the word state

Similarities between language users of the general public and the Saeima:

- the importance of the concept «**our**» state (however, in terms of absolute frequency, the combination “my state” is not used), which demonstrates the failure of the speaker to take personal responsibility,
- the commonly used term “**this** state” shows distancing from activities of the state as a formation,
- the importance attributed to **administration**, finance, language, as well as the President and presidency

Differences between language users of the general public and the Saeima session speeches:

- **in the Latvian language corpora**, the term *state* is more widespread and varied, distinguishing the range, different levels, and the position among neighbours. Language users attribute an **active** function to the word *state* by adding a verb, emphasise the role of the state in **social** and **legislative** fields, outlining **resources**

- and anticipating **development**. They emphasize the importance of people's **everyday** issues, talk about politics, at the same time attaching unspecific meanings;
- **Saeima session participants** attribute a major role to state **security** and **system** (democracy). Language and presidential factor are also prominent.

Words with the closest relative link to the word state between the 5th and 12th convocation of the Saeima

For collocation analysis, research collocation, the results are sorted by the logDice function. It reaches peak value when all occurrences of the search term (i.e. *state*) in the text are next to the collocating word AND vice-versa.

In other words, a high logDice value means that the search term and collocating word form regularly repeating phrases.

The highlighted words show the most prominent topical usage types as determined within the study, taking into account the document and dictionary review and the generated fields of usage. The table of comparison shows a consistent function of governing (“valdišana”) over the years, as well as the changing use of the words *our*, *language*, and *president* (Table 2).

Table 2. The word state between the 5th and 12th Saeima convocation

Nr.	5th Saeima	6th Saeima	7th Saeima	8th Saeima	9th Saeima	10th Saeima	11th Saeima	12th Saeima
1	<i>govern-ment</i>	<i>govern-ment</i>	<i>govern-ment</i>	<i>govern-ment</i>	<i>govern-ment</i>	democratic	<i>govern-ment</i>	revenue
2	budget	revenue	revenue	president	language	only	revenue	president
3	revenue	president	language	<u>our</u>	<u>our</u>	language	president	<i>govern-ment</i>
4	property	<u>our</u>	<u>our</u>	language	president	president	budžeta	democratic
5	president	president	budget	president	budget	<i>Government</i>	<u>our</u>	only
6	<u>our</u>	budget	budget	language	language	language	budget	language
7	security	budget	Latvia	budget	Amend-ments	president	control	budget
8	minister	Baltic	Baltic	language	control	forest	pension	control
9	reform	minister	control	democratic	president	pension	Union	president
10	budget	control	Union	budget	budget	<i>govern-ment</i>	language	<i>govern-ment</i>
11	president	ministry	president	only	revenue	president	Baltic	president
12	forest	About	stock	Union	About	secured	Latvia	secret
13	budget	secret	president	security	only	budget	official	pension
14	Baltic	minister	security	Baltic	pension	budget	About	security
15	About	security	budget	social	Amend-ment	revenue	social	budget
16	radio	language	language	Latvia	democratic	Baltic	others	budget
17	Latvia	Latvia	forest	control	social	budget	social	official
18	company	budget	president	pension	budget	border	control	control
19	minister	minister	About	budget	Latvia	control	probation	About
20	other	from	pension	revenue	civilservice	<u>our</u>	Amend-ment	Baltic

Search results of a state is in Saeima session corpus

Assuming that the notion of *state* might be defined in affirmative sentences within the parliamentary discourse, the search term used the common affirmative structure *a state is* (valsts ir).

The search returned 434 fragments. Extended search results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Frequency of different conjugation for “valsts ir” (a state is) and the rough English equivalent of those conjugations.

Latvian	English equivalent	Frequency
valstī ir	in the state is	82
valstij ir	the state has	74
valsts ir	the state is	72
valstīs ir	in states are	19
valstīm ir	states have	13
valstis ir	states are	10

Referring to X. Landes thesis about welfare crisis as a characteristic of the post-crisis society in Europe and Latvia, the next step involves search terms *state is* and *state has* within the 12th convocation of the Parliament (4 November 2014 – 6 November 2018), hoping to find a definition as an understanding of the role and importance of state.

Search results of *state is* within the session transcripts of the 12th Saeima convocation. Sorted by date (oldest to newest).

Found 43 of 405,074 (0.01%) fragments

State is (several of the following words repeated multiple times):

- **(What kind/how? (referring to characteristics))** (*Kāda?*)
supplied, arrived, joined, augmented, converted, legal;
committed, threatened, guided, defended, dependent,
- **(Has done what? (referring to actions))** (*Ko darījusi?*) Committed, provided,
promised, financed, invested, spent, paid, tasked, determined, delegated, enabled,
honored,
- **(What?)** (*Kas?*) the only, important, main capital holder.

Examples:

Is the state a mother authority or a policeman who interferes with the self-declared feelings of a person?

- Ilze Viņķele Vienotība 09/15/2016 regular session

Your comparison with a family where the **state is a parent** and merchants are the children who are quite unwise and who grow up and thrive when the state – the parents – cares for them and protects them from acting unreasonably, of course, is beautiful (...)

- Lolita Čigāne, Vienotība, 10-15-2015 regular session
... The Latvian **state has been** careful enough like a caring **owner** ...

- Andrejs Elksniņš, Saskaņa, 13/11/2014 regular session

For three years, **the state has been supporting** families...

- Ilze Viņķele, Vienotība 2015/11/19 kārtējā sēde

A safe **state is a state where there is welfare** in the families, work and stability Ingūna Sudraba, No sirds Latvijai 2014/11/20 kārtējā sēde

Search results of *state has* within the session transcripts of the 12th Saeima convocation. Sorted by date (oldest to newest).

Found 33 of 303 818 (0.01%) fragments

State has (several of the following words repeated multiple times):

- **(What?)** (Kas?) national interests, law, necessity for money, faced a loss, developed collaboration, rights, duty, plan of action, a future.
- **(To do what? Kas jādara?)** to fight, save, take up, care, provide, react, condemn, announce.
- Utterances regarding aspects that are **important, meaningful** and **necessary** to the state have been observed.

Examples:

...all that is in favour of society and the state is morally acceptable.

- Aleksandrs Kiršteins, VL-TB/LNNK, 2015/04/23 kārtējā sēde

... **the state must guarantee the** existence of the nation, its linguistic and cultural preservation and development throughout centuries.

- Aleksejs Judins, Vienotība 2016/09/15 kārtējā sēde

The state must show interest and care for the children of the citizens and inhabitants of Latvia, follow up on their fates and provide opportunities to grow up in a loving family environment in Latvia.

- Lolita Čigāne, Vienotība, 2015/10/22 kārtējā sēde

... **the state must provide a health insurance** which would not become a heavy stone in the wallet.

- Igors Pimenovs, Saskaņa 2016/10/31 kārtējā sēde

Clear guidelines for emergency social support have to be developed; **the state must take up the coordinator's role in social help...**

- Ringolds Balodis, No sirds Latvijai 2015/11/05 kārtējā sēde

The state: an appealing concept with inconsistent, ideologized connotations

Assessing the obtained results, one may again refer to K. Sedlenieks regarding the notion of *state* and how it is perceived by users of the Internet comment sections: “The noun valsts (the state) is among the most often used words in the on-line comments left by the readers of Latvian news portals below the news stories. Apparently, Latvians are concerned with the idea of the state,” (Sedlinieks, 2018). The linguistic corpus analysis of the notion

state also proves the concept appealing to the society, linking the political and the general public environment (a politician may also be a representative of individual interest).

The critical approach to discourse always takes into account the context (Dijk 2008, 109): who the speakers and listeners are, their roles, actions, aims. Therefore, one must view the topical usage of the notion *state* within context. In the varied contextual circumstances, language users blur the lines and draw a veil over the notion. In Dijk's view, context can only impact the utterance or the perception when it is viewed as a subjective construction depending on the participant of the discourse; neither political nor social situation by itself can influence text or speech. Rather, it impacts the manner of participants' representation, understanding or other relations to a given situation. (Dijk 2008, 188). To sum up, in critical approach, contexts are not external but subjective constructions (e.g., experience), which dynamically change and develop during communication. The topical usage of the word *state* both within government documents and parliamentary discourse reveals an ideologically charged understanding of the state and its functions. According to Habermas, the governing power must provide a discursive scheme where justice is created and used within circumstances of argumentation. However, justice as a function of a state is hard to execute if the discursive scheme predominantly links the state functions to cultural heritage, language, values and traditions, whereas the actors hide behind the word "we".

Conclusions

Within the framework of this study it was found that politicians in their speeches deviate from the definition of state, verbalizing it as an alienated, autonomous entity. Members of the Parliament speak of the state as a separate, independent object. It (the state) takes up, funds, provides, spends, and executes other actions which are not always supported by the speaker.

The most commonly used vocabulary in relation to the word *state* leads to believe that both citizens and politicians expect **strict management** (also financial) from the state. It is **implemented with the help of an acceptable symbol** ("president"), and in it the communication takes place in a defined **language**, and lastly – which is particularly relevant – being tied to while **not being responsible** ("our"). The use of the word *my* or *mine* is less frequent, implying a separation of the direct and individual identification with the state.

Comparisons found in 12th Saeima transcripts show a desire to see the country as «parent» «mother» or «owner». One sees expectations for the state to take initiative, care, protect, provide. Defining the view of the state as a guarantor and provider of welfare, the parliamentary discourse is supported by referring to values such as family, culture, children, language

Although in the topical use of the word «state» it does not frequently form a phrase together with the word «welfare», the expectations of the state as the «caregivers» (parents, host, fund manager, or fair distributor of shares) especially in the speeches of politicians, can be communicative about the signs of a welfare state crisis. However, in such a supply/demand scheme, the citizen accountability for a socially responsible state

fades. In the minds of the language users, the etymological view of the state as an owner and authority is still prominent.

The results anticipate more research in the field of political communication.

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